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Governor's Arts Awards



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JANUARY 22, 2010 CEREMONY

WELCOME

Jackie Parsons, Chairman, Montana Arts Council

POETRY READING

Henry Real Bird, Montana Poet Laureate

INTRODUCTION

Bill Johnston, President, Montana Ambassadors

PRESENTATION BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

The Honorable Brian Schweitzer

2010 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARDS HONOREES

John Buck, Bozeman

Deborah Butterfield, Bozeman

Donna Forbes, Billings

Amy Ragsdale, Missoula

Kelly Roberti, Bozeman

Pat Williams, Missoula/Butte

Interpretation for the hearing impaired is provided by Vickie Gregori,
Montana Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services.

Ceremony videotaping is provided by
Executive Director Stephen Maly, Helena Civic TV.

Still photography by Dustin DeYoung.

Immediately following the presentation, desserts, refreshments and
entertainment will be provided in the Rotunda.

Music provided by the Alex Swaney and Rennan Reike Duo.

Catering provided by the Vanilla Bean Bakery.

HOMETOWN CELEBRATIONS

Each of the 2010 Governor's Arts Awards recipients are being
honored in their hometown with a celebration listed below.

Amy Ragsdale and Pat Williams,

Missoula, Monday, March 15, 2010.

Chaired by Montana Ambassador Tyler Disberg.

Donna Forbes,

Billings, Friday, March 26, 2010.

Chaired by Montana Ambassador Doug Jensen.

John Buck, Deborah Butterfield, and Kelly Roberti,

Bozeman, Thursday, May 27, 2010.

Chaired by Montana Ambassador Heather Bellamy.

2010 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARDS

The Governor of the State of Montana is pleased to present the
2010 Governor's Arts Awards program through a partnership of the
Montana Arts Council and the Montana Ambassadors.

MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

The Montana Arts Council is the agency of state government established to
develop the creative potential of all Montanans, advance education,
spur economic vibrancy and revitalize communities
through involvement in the arts.

MONTANA AMBASSADORS

The Montana Ambassadors is a volunteer, nonprofit organization of
leaders in business, education and the professions, with a common
dedication to living and doing business in Montana and furthering the
best interests of the states, serving at the pleasure of the Governor.

JOHN BUCK AND DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD

John Buck and Deborah Butterfield are each world-renowned artists who, as a couple, have generously shared their home, time and talents with countless Montana artists and art students.

According to Josh DeWeese, ceramics professor at Montana State University and former director of the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, the couple share a “unique and authentic vision, and are leading voices in the field of contemporary art.”

Buck is both a sculptor and a printmaker who works with carved wood, assemblage and bronze sculptures, as well as creating large, multicolored woodblock prints.

“John Buck’s fertile imagination, deft and constantly refining craftsmanship, extraordinary work ethic, and ambitious vision have produced a stunning legacy of works,” writes artist Gordon McConnell, a former curator and assistant director at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings.

Buck’s prints and sculptures are in major public collections from New York to San Francisco, and his lengthy list of awards includes a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship and a National Artists Award.

Butterfield – known for her sculptures of horses – employs scraps of metal, wood and other found objects, often cast in bronze.

An avid horsewoman and accomplished dressage rider, she has an extensive boarding and riding facility near Bozeman devoted to equestrian pursuits. Her intimate understanding of these majestic animals seems to infuse her sculptures, which vary in scale from quarter-life-size to larger-than-life.

Her works are owned by many of the nation’s preeminent museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the San Francisco Museum of Contemporary Art and the Denver Art Museum. “Ferdinand,” one of her best-known horse sculptures, is a centerpiece of the Yellowstone Art Museum’s “Montana Collection.”

In addition to receiving honorary doctorates from both Montana State University in Bozeman and Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Butterfield has received two fellowships from the NEA, as well as a Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship and the American Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award.

“Debbie and John are outstanding artists in any geography you could consider – international, national, regional, and certainly in the state of Montana,” writes Liz Gans, former director of the Holter Museum of Art in Helena.

In addition to teaching at Montana State University (Buck from 1976-1990 and Butterfield from 1979-1987), the couple has supported art museums and institutions around the state, and welcomed inquisitive art students to their studios for a visit. They’ve hosted world-renowned artists, gallery owners and collectors at their home in Bozeman and introduced their guests to artists from around Montana.

The couple has also hosted several unique art events, including a major one-week symposium in 1991 of artists from Montana’s sister state of Kumamoto, Japan; and special exhibits and celebrations of the work and legacies of the late Robert and Gennie DeWeese (also Governor’s Arts Award recipients).

“No other Montana-based artists since C.M. Russell have been embraced by such a wide public in and beyond Montana than Debbie and John,” says Robyn Peterson, executive director of the Yellowstone Art Museum. “And none have done more to refresh and reinforce through their art the idea of this state.



Photo by Audrey Hall

“No other Montana-based artists since C.M. Russell have been embraced by such a wide public in and beyond Montana than Debbie and John.”

– Robyn Peterson,
Executive Director
Yellowstone Art Museum

DONNA FORBES

After helping transform the abandoned Yellowstone County Jail into an arts center, and then spending 24 years as its director, Donna Forbes retired in 1998 with a glittering string of accomplishments. The most obvious was the completion of the Yellowstone Art Museum, which added 25,000 feet of galleries, an education studio, meeting room and storage facilities under her guidance.

Architect Thomas Hacker, whose firm designed the YAM addition and renovation, praises Forbes for “her visionary work.” She had, he writes, “a profound and transforming role in defining the influence of the visual arts and the impact of contemporary artists of the West.”

Forbes, who grew up in Billings, was among the volunteers who gathered to renovate the deserted jail and convert it into a community center for art exhibitions and classes, opening in October 1964. In subsequent years she served as a volunteer, teacher and trustee, and in 1974, became the institution’s fourth executive director.

“Donna’s professionalism, commitment, curatorial judgment and entrepreneurship produced, from very humble beginnings, a major cultural treasure for the state,” writes Laurence

R. Martin, honorary trustee and former board president.

When Forbes took the helm, paid staff numbered four, the budget was about \$70,000, and only the ground floor and basement of the old building were being utilized for public programs. Exhibitions were rented from traveling exhibition services or featured local artists and arts organizations.

By 1996, when the center closed for the \$6.2 million renovation, there were 15 paid staff and the budget was in excess of \$700,000.

Throughout her career as director, Forbes was actively involved with the American Association of Museums, the American Federation of the Arts, the Art Museum Association of America, the Western States Arts Federation, and the Montana Art Gallery Directors Association. She was among the first museum professionals to complete the prestigious Museum Management Institute program at the University of California, Berkeley.

Forbes had a close friendship with her teacher and mentor, the painter and rancher Isabelle Johnson, and became friends with Johnson’s Montana modernist compatriots: Bill Stockton,

Edith Freeman, Lyndon Pomeroy, Jessie Wilber, Frances Senska, Bob and Gennie DeWeese, and Rudy and Lela Autio.

During her tenure, the art center became the first museum in Montana to actively collect the works of the state’s leading contemporary artists. “The Montana Collection” encompassed works by both the older generation, and younger artists, such as Theodore Waddell, Russell Chatham, Deborah Butterfield and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.

The collection’s breadth and vision captured the imagination of the late Billings philanthropist Miriam Sample, who contributed more than \$500,000 to acquisitions, publications and an innovative series of television PSAs on the artists in the collection.

“Donna’s passion for excellence and commitment to collecting the best works for a permanent Montana Collection gradually infused energy, passion and hope among regional artists,” write Bozeman artists Clarice Dreyer and Steve Kelly. “The seeds she planted through her decades of service now bear fruit year after year for Montana’s artists, not just in the state, but well beyond our borders.”



Photo by Ceitron Studios, Billings

“Donna’s professionalism, commitment, curatorial judgment and entrepreneurship produced, from very humble beginnings, a major cultural treasure for the state.”

– Laurence R. Martin,
Former YAM President

AMY RAGSDALE

Juliette Crump, dance professor emeritus at UM, describes her colleague Amy Ragsdale as “a beautiful dancer whose many performances over the years have mesmerized and intrigued me for their clarity of expression and daring technique.”

The longtime University of Montana dance professor and founder of Headwaters Dance Company and its predecessor, The Montana Transport Company (Mo-Trans), moved to Montana in 1988 from her native New York City, where she had danced with several contemporary troupes. As a dancer and teacher, she has performed and taught throughout the United States and around the world, including Bali, Java, Sumatra, Indonesia, South Korea, Spain and Martinique.

She found abundant challenges, as well as inspiration, in moving to Montana, where many audiences had little exposure to contemporary dance. In response, she began to make works that were more theatrical and accessible.

After founding Headwaters Dance Company in 2004, Ragsdale embarked upon an ambitious project: “The Montana Suite,” a compilation of four dances, created by four nationally known choreographers and inspired

by four Montana landscapes – the Boulder Batholith, the Hi-Line, the Rocky Mountain Front and the southeastern corner of the state.

Each choreographer spent a week to 10 days in their assigned region, touring, meeting locals, and reading fiction and non-fiction about the place. Then they created a 20-minute dance based on their impressions, in collaboration with a Montana-based composer.

The epic “movement anthology” premieres Feb. 5-7 in Missoula. After touring Montana, the suite will be performed regionally and nationally. According to Crump, the project exemplifies how Ragsdale “is always looking for ways to connect her dance to Montana communities and to relevant issues for Montanans.”

Ragsdale has made her mark as a teacher too, having received the Outstanding Teacher Award from the School of Fine Arts, and the Outstanding Faculty Award from The University of Montana. She headed the dance program from 1988-2000.

According to Michele Antonioli, an associate professor of dance at UM, Ragsdale “took a strong but relatively small division and with her leadership, passion for excellence, skill,

professionalism and intelligence helped it to evolve into a dynamic and integral part of dance arts education in the Northwest.”

Ragsdale is also credited with developing a vigorous, adventuresome dance community in Missoula. Antonioli praises both her “stunning collaborative pieces” and her site-specific works for broadening awareness and appreciation of modern dance in the state.

“Amy has truly bloomed where she was planted,” writes former student Lindsay Gilmour, who is now an assistant professor of theater arts at Ithaca College in New York. “She has brought cutting-edge contemporary dance to Montana and brought Montana to established centers of dance around the country.”

Laura Millin, executive director of the Missoula Art Museum, notes that dance is among the most difficult art forms to sustain, especially in rural areas with little dance tradition. “Ragsdale has created a remarkably successful career and established Headwaters against the odds and steep challenges,” Millin writes. “She is a pioneer in her field and deserves to be celebrated for her visionary work and dedication to Montana.”



Photo by Terry Cyr

“Amy has truly bloomed where she was planted. She has brought cutting-edge contemporary dance to Montana and brought Montana to established centers of dance around the country.”

– Lindsay Gilmour,
Assistant Professor of Theater Arts
Ithaca College, NY

KELLY ROBERTI

Jazz artist Kelly Roberti's roots dive deeply in Montana soil. Roberti was raised in Bozeman by a family of music teachers and performers, and steeped in many musical genres as a child.

He played his first gig at age 11 and has gone on to tour with legends in the jazz, rock and world music, including Arnett Cobb, Eddie Harris, Peter Gabriel, Freddie Hubbard and Tommy Flanagan. Along the way, he's performed at major venues, both clubs and festivals, on five continents.

During the late 1980s, Roberti organized tours throughout the U.S., and also hired well-known recording artists to tour with his NRE trio, comprised of Roberti on bass, Bob Nell on piano and Brad Edwards on drums. He has recorded over 50 albums with Montana artists, as well as some of the greatest jazz musicians in the world, and currently tours and records with the renowned jazz saxophonist and bass clarinetist David Murray.

The Village Voice describes Roberti as "a shaman of the bass with the ability to take the receptive listener into a wonderland of thought."

Pianist and MSU music professor Eric Funk, who has performed with Roberti

on many occasions, says the bassist "stands rarely among his colleagues as a seasoned, authentic jazz artist who has occupied the world's stages with the legends."

He also credits Roberti with inspiring generations of Montana musicians as both a teacher and performer "who wields honesty into the mix of their musical training."

Roberti has brought many master musicians to the state, including Murray, Don Pullen and Emily Remler, and paired them with locals, both in workshops and performances. "Kelly has always challenged other players living in Montana to truly explore our depth of commitment and dedication to the jazz idiom as well as our personal musical development," writes jazz artist M.J. Williams.

Roberti helped found the Bozeman Blues and Jazz Society in 1982 and continued producing jazz performances over the next two decades, organizing more than 100 memorable performances by some of the greatest figures in jazz, including Nat Adderley, Eddie Harris, Tommy Flanagan, Ray Brown, Woody Shaw, Arnett Cobb and David "Fathead" Newman.

"I can think of no single person I have known who knows more about jazz..." says Ray Pratt, one of the society's co-founders and professor emeritus of political science at Montana State University. "He has lived the music and performed it with some of its greatest practitioners."

"Jazz with Kelly Roberti," a free summer series launched at the Bozeman Public Library in 2008, has helped infect a younger generation with a passion for jazz, and reintroduce the genre to others. Paula Beswick, the library's foundation director, lauds Roberti for "his dedication, skill, and ability to bring the community together under the umbrella of music."

Matthew Savery, music director and conductor of the Bozeman Symphony, calls Roberti "a true Montana gem," revered for his playing, teaching, composition and contribution to the world of music.

"He has exposed the people of our state to a unique knowledge that one normally cannot get unless living in a major metropolitan area," adds Savery. "We are so lucky to have him among us!"



Photo by Deirdre Eitel

"Kelly Roberti stands rarely among his colleagues as a seasoned, authentic jazz artist who has occupied the world's stages with the legends."

– Eric Funk,
Pianist and
MSU Music Professor

PAT WILLIAMS

Pat Williams, who served Montana as its U.S. Congressman for nine terms, from 1979-1997, is well known for his staunch advocacy to save the National Endowment for the Arts during the early 1990s, a full generation ago.

During his years in office, the Butte native served as Deputy Whip and was a member of the committees on Budget, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Education and Labor, where he chaired committees on Post-secondary Education and Labor Management. He was active on behalf of education, libraries, Native American tribal sovereignty, wilderness protection, environmental integrity for western states, and the National Endowments for the Arts and for the Humanities.

When the National Endowment for the Arts came under attack for subsidizing what some legislators considered sexually explicit art, Williams led the fight to save the agency.

"He was a tireless and fearless supporter of the arts," reports John Frohnmayer, who served as chairman of the NEA during that tumultuous era.

Frohnmayer recalls that Williams threatened to prevent adjournment of Congress until the Endowment's

Reauthorization Bill was considered, and worked tirelessly to craft language that allowed the Endowment to continue.

"I revere this man," writes Frohnmayer. "Courage in public life is high on my list of admirable characteristics and Pat showed courage time and again in support of both the arts and the First Amendment."

Thanks to the legislator's monumental efforts to save the NEA, Montana organizations still benefit from direct endowment grants or re-grant funds managed by the Montana Arts Council. From 1998-2008, more than \$9 million in grant funds have directly benefited Montana. This money serves three out of every five Montana towns, and reaches into every single county.

Missoula resident Sue Talbot, a Governor's Arts Award recipient and former chairman of the Montana Arts Council, recalls visiting the legislator in Washington, DC. "Pat ... believed that state or federal support should supplement individual and corporate donations for the small town art museum and the tour groups who present in rural areas, as well as the larger institutions in major Montana cities.

"His battles for the National Endowment for the Arts must have been personally taxing," she says. "But the reward was a success that has benefited not just Montana but our entire country."

Williams is an educator by profession and after leaving Congress he resumed his career at The University of Montana where he teaches courses in environmental studies, history and political science, and remains active in several organizations that benefit Montanans. His wife, Carol, is the Minority Leader of the Montana State Senate – the first woman to serve in that position. Together, they fund an undergraduate scholarship in art at UM.

"Folks all across the country are better off because Congressman Williams educated all of us about the value of the arts and how important it is to keep the arts and humanities lights going across this nation," writes James P. Foley, who spent 11 years as chief of staff for Williams, and is now executive vice president at The University of Montana. "His efforts to champion artists were a huge gift to Montana and our nation."



Photo Courtesy of The University of Montana

"Folks all across the country are better off because Congressman Williams educated all of us about the value of the arts and how important it is to keep the arts and humanities lights going across this nation."

– James Foley,
UM Executive Vice President

PREVIOUS GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARDS HONOREES

Philip Aaberg, 1995
Stephen Ambrose, 1999
Eugene Andrie, 1981
Archie Bray Foundation,
1981
Rudy Autio, 1981
Francis Bardanouve, 1995
Joanna Barker, 2001
Uri Barnea, 2003
Bigfork Summer
Playhouse, 1997
Judith Blegen, 1983
Dana Boussard, 1987
James Lee Burke, 2001
Ray Campeau, 1987
Donald Carey, 2001
Russell Chatham, 1997
Corwin Clairmont, 2008
Terry Conrad, 2008
Custer County Art and
Heritage Center, 2003
Gennie DeWeese, 1995
Robert DeWeese, 1995
Ivan Doig, 1991
Becky Eiker, 2005
Judy Ericksen, 2003
LaDonna Fehlberg, 1983
Robert Fehlberg, 1983
Edith Freeman, 1993
Fort Peck Summer
Theater and
Fort Peck Fine Arts
Council, 1999
Eric Funk, 2001
A.B. Guthrie, Jr., 1982
James Haughey, 1981
Hawthorne School, 2005

Walter Hook, 1985
Elmer Jakab, 1999
Dorothy Johnson, 1983
Isabelle Johnson, 1983
Oshanee (Agnes)
Kenmille, 2001
William Kittredge, 1985
Ed Lahey, 2008
John Lester, 1986
Myrna Loy, 1989
Stan Lynde, 1983
Norman Maclean, 1987
Arnie Malina, 1997
Thomas McGuane, 1989
Wally McRae, 1989
Terry Melton, 1991
Missoula Children's
Theatre, 1987
Montana Institute of the
Arts, 1993
Montana Power
Company, 1999
Montana Repertory
Theatre, 1983
Montana Shakespeare in
the Parks, 1991
Mary E. Moore, 1997
Robert F. Morgan, 2001
Jo-Anne Mussulman,
1999
Dr. Joseph Mussulman,
1999
David Nelson, 1999
Christopher Parkening,
1987
Myrna Paulus, 2001
Ralph Paulus, 2001

Eewokso - Ernie Pepion,
2005
Lyndon Fayne Pomeroy,
1991
James Poor, 1985
James Kenneth Ralston,
1984
Bernie Rasmussen, 1981
Mary Agnes Roberts, 1991
Joseph S. Sample, 1997
Miriam Sample, 1997
Robert Scriver, 1990
Gary Schildt, 1999
Edmund Sedivy, 1993
Frances Senska, 1988
David Shaner, 1989
Kevin Shannon, 1987
Michael Smuin, 1981
Harold Sprague, 1985
Virginia Sprague, 1985
Benjamin Steele, 1992
Shirley Steele, 1992
William Stockton, 2003
John Talbot, 1994
Susan Talbot, 1994
U S WEST Foundation,
1989
Agnes Vanderburg, 1983
Allen Vizutti, 2008
Peter Voulkos, 1985
James Welch, 1981
Larry D. Williams, 2003
Jessie Wilber, 1988
Yellowstone Art Museum,
1995
Thomas Yellowtail, 1993
Paul Zarzyski, 2005

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BROADCAST INTERVIEW SUPPORT

Joel Baird, Missoula Community
Access Television

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Thank you to the General Services
Division staff at the State Capitol who
help with the Governor's Arts Awards,
including: Capitol Crew Boss Jay Scow,
Kim Cross and Deborah Malensek in
Facilities Management and Jeanne
Nevins in the Governor's Office of
Budget and Program Planning.

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